

To: John Ruhs[jruhs@blm.gov]; Marci Todd[m1todd@blm.gov]
Cc: Cook, Christopher[cjcook@blm.gov]
From: Pritchett, David
Sent: 2017-03-30T17:09:37-04:00
Importance: Normal
Subject: version5: Briefing materials for 3/31 Southern Nevada RMP
Received: 2017-03-30T17:09:50-04:00
[briefing memo\(5\) So NV Supplemental RMP.docx](#)

WO-100 Shannon Stewart edited the Briefing Memo earlier today, so attached here is that version(5). It does not (my opinion) feature any substantive changes to the content and message and issues in the Memo(4) that I sent yesterday.

More importantly, see the message immediately below, red highlight. This may be new or not, but this seems like the folks there may not be considering that this Notice of Intent package already is entered and has been routed via DTS, although the latest status shown is that the package is back to Planning (WO-200) "on hold" as DTS no. 1397. The Briefing docs from this week deliberately have not proposed anything that would require the Notice of Intent to be changed or edited.

I will come in early at 0650 Friday tomorrow to be available if needed.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Carman, Stephanie <scarman@blm.gov>
Date: Thu, Mar 30, 2017 at 1:11 PM
Subject: Fwd: Briefing materials for 3/31 Southern Nevada RMP
To: Leah Baker <lbaker@blm.gov>, Nathan Morris <namorris@blm.gov>, "Pritchett, David" <dpritchett@blm.gov>
Cc: "Tryon, Steve" <stryon@blm.gov>, Thomas Bartholomew <tbarthol@blm.gov>

Attached is the updated briefing paper sent forward. I did not send the NOI materials again, because chatting with Shannon/100, this is just a preliminary/background meeting and the NOI stuff can be routed after. But, heads up, you should probably get them ready/clarified/updated.

Stephanie Carman
Acting WO200 Resource Adviser 3/27 3/31

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: Carman, Stephanie <scarman@blm.gov>
Date: Thu, Mar 30, 2017 at 4:05 PM
Subject: Re: Briefing materials for 3/31 Southern Nevada RMP
To: "Stewart, Shannon" <scstewar@blm.gov>
Cc: Melanie Mitchell <mmitchell@blm.gov>

Hi Shannon - attached is an updated briefing paper. I am checking on the NOI documents (the other two).

Stephanie Carman

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**INFORMATION / BRIEFING MEMORANDUM
FOR THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY – LAND AND MINERALS MANAGEMENT**

DATE: March 31, 2017

FROM: Michael D. Nedd, Acting Director – Bureau of Land Management
John F. Ruhs, Nevada State Director

SUBJECT: Supplemental Draft Resource Management Plan covering the
Southern Nevada District Planning Area, including Gold Butte National
Monument

The purpose of this memo is to provide a status update on the Supplemental Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Southern Nevada District Planning Area and to confirm approval for publication of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register to re-initiate this planning effort.

KEY FACTS

Jobs: Management decisions --such as permits, available recreational activities, and land disposals-- arising out of the land use planning process may affect numerous jobs in the region, especially by providing certainty for business decisions and local government planning. The socio-economic impact analysis in the RMP will address the effects on regional basis; however, detailed analyses would be conducted through subsequent project-specific NEPA reviews.

Stakeholder Positions: Discussed below under the descriptions of *Prominent Issues and Positions of Interested Parties*.

Public Lands Affected: Approximately 3.0 million acres located in Clark County and the southern portion of Nye County (see maps attached and *Background* below).

BACKGROUND

The RMP covering the BLM Southern Nevada District Planning Area is under revision from its prior version completed in 1998. The Planning Area encompasses approximately 3.0 million acres, located in Clark County and the southern portion of Nye County (see map attached). The Las Vegas metro area (population 2.3 million) is situated in the center of the Planning Area, accentuating the intensive public interest in BLM activities and management there.

The RMP does not cover: private lands, State lands, Indian reservations, Federal lands not administered by the BLM, Nellis Test and Training Range (U.S. Air Force), or lands addressed in the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area RMP (2005) and the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area RMP (2006).

The RMP process is currently between the public Draft and the Administrative Final RMP phases. The Proposed RMP and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that has been under

development was paused for internal review in July 2016. This procedural pause was based upon concerns and issues raised by our many partners, stakeholders, and the public affected by this RMP (see *Discussion* below). During the latter half of 2016, the Nevada State Office coordinated with the Washington Office Planning Division and the Solicitors, and determined that a Supplemental Draft RMP/EIS, with a new 60-day public scoping period, would be the best approach to address the concerns and issues raised.

The Supplemental Draft RMP/EIS will also address the recent designation of the Gold Butte National Monument (GBNM), which covers 296,937 acres in the planning area. As required under Manual 6620, the Division of National Lands Conservation System was consulted about the planning approach for GBNM and concur that GBNM could be incorporated into a single RMP with separate Records of Decision published for GBNM and the remainder of the Planning Area. The GBNM portion of the Planning Area (see attached map) will be analyzed under the Special Designations section of the RMP, consistent with standard organization of RMP documents. On February 9, 2017, the BLM Southern Nevada District Office conducted a public information meeting about GBNM, held at Mesquite City Hall, in Mesquite, Nevada, with about 180 participants and extensive news coverage

- Draft RMP, public documents in ePlanning, Land Use Register
https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl_front_office/eplanning/planAndProjectSite.do?methodName=renderDefaultPlanOrProjectSite&projectId=2900
- Gold Butte National Monument webpage, including a map and the designating Proclamation
https://www.blm.gov/programs/national_conservation_lands/national_monuments/nevada

DISCUSSION

Supplemental Draft RMP/EIS

As indicated in the Notice of Intent, the scope of the Supplemental Draft RMP/EIS for the larger Planning Area is limited to the specific issues of: solar energy zones and solar development, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), lands with wilderness characteristics, land tenure adjustments (i.e., land disposals), and socio-economics within the Southern Nevada District Planning Area. For the geographic area of the GBNM (296,937 acres), the scope will consider a broader range of planning issues and criteria, such as recreational access, permitting, and resource protection, and as consistent with the designating Proclamation.

The purpose of the supplemental public scoping process is to incorporate substantive comments received since the initial Draft RMP/EIS was made available in October 2014 for public and Cooperating Agency review, and to incorporate new information, field data, and changing circumstances, such as recent Federal land transfers, designation of the GBNM, and the BLM Final Solar and Wind Rule (November 10, 2016). Comments already received on the initial Draft RMP/EIS have been analyzed and will continue to be considered for the Supplemental Draft RMP/EIS, and such consideration will be highlighted prominently during upcoming public scoping meetings and other outreach.

Cooperating Agencies

Cooperating Agencies that participated actively in the initial Draft RMP/EIS in 2014-2015, and subsequent review of the Proposed RMP/Administrative Final EIS in 2016, include: five municipalities (all of them in the planning area), both counties (Clark and Nye), one tribe (Moapa Band of Piutes), three State agencies (including Governor's Office), and eight Federal agencies (including Nellis Air Force Base and several Interior bureaus). Thirteen tribal governments or related groups also were consulted or contacted, in addition to the regional BLM Resource Advisory Council (Mo-So RAC).

During late 2015 and early 2016, many of these Cooperating Agencies (particularly local governments) provided additional input and written comments as BLM drafted the Proposed RMP. Substantive comments from this recent input informed us on the need for the Supplemental RMP, especially on socio-economics and land tenure adjustments. All of the Cooperating Agencies will be re-engaged as the RMP advances. Focused outreach to City of Mesquite and Virgin Valley Water District (a new Cooperating Agency) also will occur, as these agencies serve the area immediately north of the GBNM.

Prominent Issues and Positions of Interested Parties

As mentioned above, several aspects of the Draft RMP/EIS received substantive comments and significant interest, summarized below with proposals to address.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern: The Proposed RMP identifies 37 ACECs (retain 21 existing and establish 17 new) that were nominated internally and externally. To address landscape planning continuity with ACECs and potential edge-mapping issues across the border in California, the Supplemental Draft RMP/EIS and the PRMP/FEIS will include an additional map exhibit that depicts planning continuity with the contiguous Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP), recently completed by BLM in September 2016. Depending on the stakeholder perspective, designation of ACECs may allow for additional protection of natural resources (mainly sensitive species or cultural sites) or be considered a hindrance to energy development, recreation, rights-of-ways, and/or lands for disposal.

Land Disposals: The current Proposed RMP identifies 118,466 acres for disposal, of which 59,174 acres are legislatively designated or required. The lands identified for disposal have been reduced in the Proposed RMP from the No-Action and Preferred Alternatives of the Draft RMP, mainly because of concerns regarding the possible adverse effects to groundwater-dependent species, such as the endangered Devils Hole Pupfish and Moapa Dace. The two County governments have expressed concern that the reduction in areas for disposal would limit future urban development opportunities unless the RMP were amended in future years to allow for additional or different land disposal areas. For the mainly Nye County portion of the RMP planning area, a groundwater model is being prepared by US Geological Survey (<http://nevada.usgs.gov/water/studyareas/samm.htm>), with internal and scientific peer review now completed and a final report by USGS anticipated for publication in late spring 2017, which is expected to inform substantially on the Supplemental RMP. The Clark County portion of the planning area is largely covered by other groundwater models approved by the Nevada State Engineer, the agency with jurisdiction over water resources.

Lands with Wilderness Characteristics: The Draft RMP/EIS (published late 2014) identified 21 areas or units (242,214 acres total) that possess wilderness character, based upon field work completed during 2010-2011 and largely focusing on units that were nominated then by public advocacy organizations. Public comments subsequently received on the Draft RMP/EIS in spring 2015 correctly indicated that BLM had not completed a comprehensive wilderness character inventory for the entire RMP planning area, to be consistent with BLM Manual 6310. In response to these substantive public comments, additional inventory field work (not including the GBNM area) was completed in summer 2015, which identified a total of 41 units (670,958 acres total) of lands with wilderness character. For the Proposed RMP, nine of these units (208,021 acres) are identified to be managed to maintain wilderness characteristics, 11 units (116,578 acres) are to be managed with other resources having priority over wilderness characteristics due to other statutory requirements, and 21 units (429,886 acres) are identified in the Proposed RMP to be managed commensurate with other resource values to protect wilderness characteristics, such as ACECs or other overlapping designations. Depending on the stakeholder perspective, these land use decisions may allow for protection of wilderness character or be considered a hindrance to mineral and renewable energy development, recreation, rights-of-way, and/or lands for disposal.

Renewable Energy: In addition to the two existing Solar Energy Zones (SEZ) identified in the Solar Energy Development Programmatic EIS (2012), which amended the currently applicable RMP (1998), the Proposed RMP identifies three additional SEZs. The PRMP considered the 2015 solar energy market analysis by National Renewable Energy Laboratory. With input from the BLM Zonal Economist, the Proposed RMP also is incorporating current socio-economic conditions discussed with local Cooperating Agencies. Public workshops conducted by BLM to address solar energy issues are anticipated to be held in mid 2017 as focused discussions during the scoping meetings. Positions of stakeholder groups are outlined below.

- **Environmental Groups.** Some organizations have expressed concerns that the identification protocols in the Solar Development PEIS (2012) for identifying new SEZs were not followed and that the Draft RMP/EIS did not provide sufficient NEPA analysis of the resource impacts of the alternatives.
- **Solar Industry.** Some industry groups have also expressed concerns that the new proposed SEZs were located without industry input and would be cost prohibitive, and that the proposed SEZs did not provide for connectivity to nearby electric transmission corridors. Additionally, the number of acres for exclusion has increased and the solar variance areas have decreased from the Solar Development PEIS (2012) and may be perceived by industry as limiting the opportunity for development.
- **Tribal Governments.** During early January 2017, a concept was proposed via BLM Washington Office where Moapa tribal lands also could be addressed in the Supplemental RMP concerning solar energy issues. That approach may be feasible considering the nexus to electric transmission and solar development on the surrounding BLM lands. However, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) would remain under NEPA as the Lead Federal Agency for any specific project on Moapa tribal lands but BIA later could adopt or tier off the FEIS prepared by BLM.

Other Issues:

- **Travel and Transportation.** The PRMP changes off-highway vehicle (OHV) allocations from “Limited to existing roads, trails, and dry washes” to “Limited to designated routes”. These proposed allocations may be perceived by the public as a way to restrict access to public lands, and were a prominent topic of the public comments from 2015 and earlier. Consistent with updated policy (Manual 1626), travel management will be completed as an implementation-level plan once the RMP is complete. The travel management plan for the area of the GBNM and the adjacent ACEC, though, already is complete since 2008 and will expedite further planning for the GBNM area.
- **Recreational Target Shooting Closure.** The PRMP features an additional 17,824 acres of closure area within the proposed Logandale Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) to protect persons and property. This proposed closure was coordinated with the national Shooting Sports Roundtable group. Additional comments earlier stated a preference for no shooting closures and wanted the BLM to find other means to control shooting, such as developing specific recreational shooting sites.
- **Fluid Minerals.** Compared with the Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMP, the Proposed RMP (the latest internal draft version) includes additional areas open to fluid minerals leasing with stipulations for No Surface Occupancy. Southern Nevada, however, shows minimal potential for oil and gas development.

NEXT STEPS

Publication of the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register will initiate the scoping process for the Supplemental Draft RMP/EIS. After scoping and further coordination with Cooperating Agencies and other stakeholders, a Supplemental Draft RMP/EIS would be published for public comment, followed by a Proposed RMP/Final EIS, and eventually two separate Records of Decision (tentative schedule below).

Upon approval of the Notice of Intent, we will estimate dates and determine venues for 4 or 5 public scoping meetings to be held throughout the Planning Area, including a meeting in Mesquite (closest city and gateway community) to highlight issues most pertinent to GBNM.

Status & Schedule

▪ Initial Public Scoping and Notice of Intent	Jan. 2010
▪ Initial Draft RMP and Notice of Availability	Oct. 2014
▪ Initial Public Comment Period Ended (150 days)	Mar. 2015
▪ Admin. Draft Alternatives for PRMP presented to Cooperating Agencies	May 2016
▪ Admin. Draft Alternatives for PRMP reviewed by Nevada State Office	June 2016
▪ RMP process paused for internal review	July 2016
▪ <i>Supplemental Public Scoping and NOI (60-day comment period begins)</i>	<i>TBD</i>
▪ Admin. version, Supplemental Draft RMP/EIS, potential completion	Feb. 2018
▪ Public version, Supplemental Draft RMP/EIS, potential Notice of Availability	April 2018
▪ Admin. Draft Proposed RMP/Final EIS potential completion	Sep. 2018

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| ▪ Proposed RMP/Final EIS, potential review by Washington Office | Sep. 2018 |
| ▪ Proposed RMP/Final EIS potential Notice of Availability, start Protest Period | Nov. 2018 |
| ▪ Potential Record of Decision, covering Las Vegas and Pahrump Field Offices | FY19 |
| ▪ Potential Record of Decision, covering Gold Butte National Monument | FY20 |

ATTACHMENTS

- Map of Southern Nevada District Planning Area
- Map of Gold Butte National Monument



Southern Nevada District Office

Las Vegas Field Office - Pahrump Field Office
RMP Revision

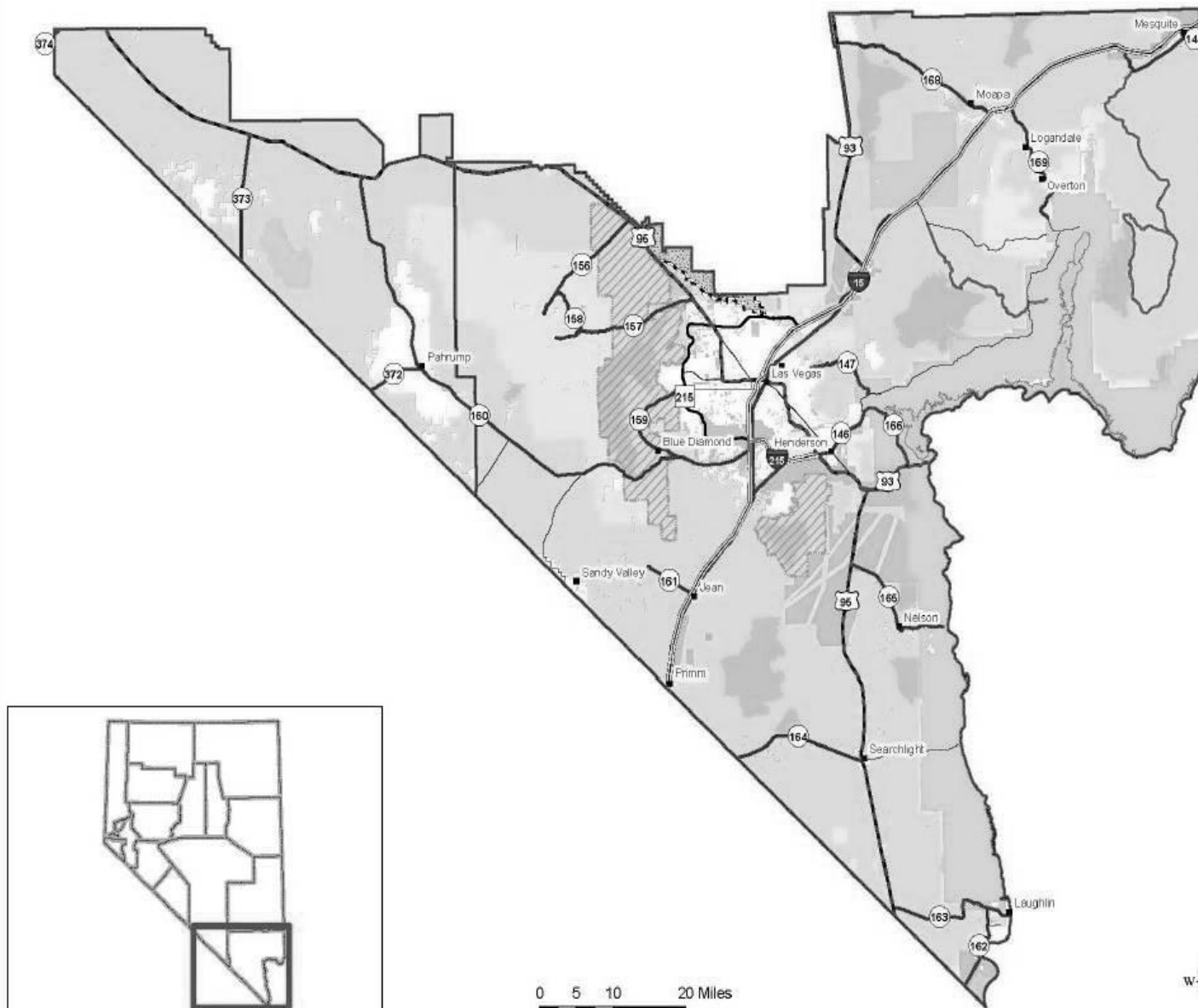
Planning Area Map 1.4 - 1

Legend

- City Location
- SNDO RMP Planning Area
- Lake Mead
- National Monument
- National Conservation Area
- BLM Wilderness
- Land Status**
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs
 - Bureau of Land Management
 - Bureau of Reclamation
 - Department of Defense
 - Department of Energy
 - Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Forest Service
 - National Park Service
 - Nevada State
 - Local Government
 - Private



No Warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.



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